

# El Cajon City Council 2021 Priorities & Goals

Year End Report  
January 18, 2022



# Introduction

The adage says, “Don’t Try to Do Everything — You’ll End Up Accomplishing Nothing.” This maxim applies to cities. There are far more needs in a community than there are resources to meet those needs. Given this reality, in January and February 2021, the El Cajon City Council engaged in a process of prioritizing the City’s primary needs and then established sixteen goals to address those priorities. The priorities and goals were established by the City Council after conducting a series of workshops and meetings, while taking input from residents.

These priorities and goals make up the 2021 Action Plan. The Action Plan helps:

- Establish a vision for the City;
- Provide a clear and transparent message to the community of how limited resources will be allocated; and
- Allows the City to be proactive rather than reactive.

These priorities established by the City Council augment on- going and regular municipal services the City provides. Also, since the creation of the Council Action Plan, the City received approximately \$30 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds with a charge to spend those funds by December 2024. In addition to the goals set forth through this plan, the City is working to complete ARPA projects.

# Communication/Civic Engagement

Communicating and engaging its citizens is a priority for the City. In the past few years, the City increased its social media presence and strives to provide residents with important information. For example, the City posted 84% more social media posts last year than previous years and the City launched its mobile phone app to better connect with its citizens. The 2021 City Council Action Plan includes two goals that will help the City better communicate and help residents become more involved.

# Communication/Civic Engagement

Goal/Outcome	Milestones/Tasks	Progress
Refine City's communication/outreach/engagement plan, addressing what stakeholders want to receive and how to best communicate that information as well as strategies to increase civic engagement will all in the community	Host several community focus groups aimed at receiving feedback from a wide-range of community members about communication and civic engagement	Complete – staff met with the following groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chaldean Radio – Middle Eastern / Chaldean</li> <li>SD New Comers – Middle Eastern</li> <li>El Cajon Collaborative – senior service providers</li> <li>El Cajon Collaborative – Hispanic &amp; Middle Eastern residents</li> <li>Chamber of Commerce – business community</li> <li>Cajon Valley School District –district communications staff</li> </ul>
	Council to receive a report on current communication efforts and feedback received from focus groups	Complete – report provided to the Council on September 14, 2021.
	Based on, Council to receive a report on proposed implementation plan	In Progress – implementation plan developed and will be presented to the City Council on February 22, 2022.
	Begin implementation of plan	On-Going
Leverage technology and social media to promote the City, its events, and the community by relying on experiential marketing	Council to receive an update on use of social media as part of the 8/10/2021 report (see above)	Complete – report provided to the Council on September 14, 2021
	Implement feedback from City Council	On-Going

# Economic Development

Economic development is the lifeblood for any city. El Cajon has had significant success in this area over the past five years, but many opportunities remain un-tapped. The 2021 City Council Action Plan includes two economic development goals to help strengthen the City's fiscal position, enabling it to provide more services to its residents.

# Economic Development

Goal/Outcome	Milestones/Tasks	Progress
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan to address opportunities, marketing, incentives, and priorities	Present a “small business” economic development strategy to Council for consideration. Elements of this will include financial assistance for start-up businesses, exploration of additional business districts, and business incentives	Complete – report provided to Council on April 13, 2021. Direction to prepare an economic development study via a consultant was directed, which is now underway.
	Work with EC-EDC and other regional partners and perhaps present a Request for Qualifications to Council for a consultant to study market conditions and identify target businesses for the City to attract	In Progress – The Natelson Dale Group working with EC-EDC and began work on the study on July 26, 2021. The consultant also expanded its scope to include analysis regarding impacts of the County's Working Families Ordinance.
	Consider land purchases and/or partnership with large undeveloped and developed sites for development or redevelopment	Incomplete – staff is waiting for results of consultant study to assist in other opportunities.
Analyze zoning policies that inhibit development with a focus on possible boundary changes of the Downtown Specific Plan	Council to receive a report with an analysis and possible resolution of intent to initiate amendment of Specific Plan No. 182	Complete – report provided on April 27, 2021 regarding various amendment options to SP 182.
	Based on resolution of intent, present draft SP No. 182 amendments to the Planning Commission	In Process – the Council directed staff to present code modifications that would allow for select freeway oriented uses on properties north of Madison Ave. within the boundaries of SP 182. This is included in the Zoning Code Amendment scheduled for 12-14-21.
	Council to consider Planning Commission recommendations regarding any proposed amendments to SP No. 182	In Process – see above

# Enhance Image of City (Entry Locations)

One of the City Council's goals is to enhance the appearance of the City, with a focus on its entryways. The City Council identified two goals related to this priority.

# Enhance Image of City (Entry Locations)

Goal/Outcome	Milestones/Tasks	Progress
Develop and implement a landscape/beautification plan around the City's main entry locations	Council to receive presentation for feedback regarding "big ideas" to consider implementing and methodology of selecting entryways	Complete – report provided to Council on April 27, 2021 with feedback to proceed given.
	With feedback provided at 4/27/2021 meeting, Council to receive an implementation plan in the form of entryway capital improvement program	In Process – staff is finalizing CIP scope. Phase 1 to be presented to Council during Mid-Year FY 2021-22 budget and Phase 2 to be included in the FY 2022-23 CIP.
	Implement program	Incomplete – pending CIP budget approvals.
Attract businesses near entry locations	Identify properties near City entry locations that are suitable for development or redevelopment opportunities and create a property profile for each, along with zoning information and possible commercial uses	In Process – this task is being specifically being addressed in The Natelson Dale Group study. Progress on this task is on hold until the completion of the study. Expected completion date of the study is first quarter 2022 with work commencing in mid-2022.
	Make contact with property owners of target properties to understand needs and long-term intentions to identify viable opportunities	Incomplete – see above.
	Begin working with commercial real estate brokers and development community to promote viable sites for development	Incomplete – see above.
	Keep the Council updated through regular memos	Incomplete – see above.



# Homelessness

Over the past three years, the City has launched nine programs aimed at providing permanent and temporary housing for those experiencing homelessness. The 2021 City Council Action Plan includes three additional goals:

# Homelessness

Goal/Outcome	Milestones/Tasks	Progress
Increase enforcement on drug dealers supplying vulnerable homeless population	Council to receive presentation identifying current problem, enforcement efforts, and limitations (legal, State policy, and budgetary) along with options to consider	Complete – staff provided briefings to Council members about possible challenges to program.
	Implement program determined by the Council	N/A
	Council to receive a report on outcomes of the program	N/A
Coordinate homeless services and housing with cities in the East County region so that all jurisdictions in the region share the responsibility of providing housing and services to individuals experiencing homelessness	Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with East County jurisdictions that addresses shared emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, and coordination of services	In Process – staff has drafted a MOU, along with the County and neighboring city staff. Staff hopes to present the MOU for City Council consideration at its February 22, 2022 meeting.
	Council to consider MOU for approval	In Process – staff aims to present the MOU in early 2022.

# Homelessness (continued)

Goal/Outcome	Milestones/Tasks	Progress
Continue to address and clean up homeless encampments and debris	Begin power washing frequent encampment areas with vacation noticing. Council to receive proposed changes to the City's Municipal Code providing staff with additional enforcement powers and the Council will be presented with a contract for power washing	<p>Ongoing – in 2021, 26 areas have been powerwashed by City staff.</p> <p>Incomplete – staff has not yet developed recommended Municipal Code language for Council consideration. City currently gives 24 hour notice and we have not encountered issues. This policy may not be needed.</p>
	Expand contracted services to assist City with cleanup efforts	In Process – City contracted with Urban Corps of SD to provide clean up service and staff is evaluating additional services to assist with powerwashing.
	Increase communication to the community, Council, and homeless community regarding efforts to assist in providing housing options and cleanup efforts; create a ride-along program for the public	Incomplete – staff plans to prepare public information, including a two-page “FAQ” and a short animated video that addresses challenges faced by the community, legal barriers, programs implemented, and results achieved.
	Develop and present possible policies to the Council regarding vacant lot maintenance, including proactive code enforcement on vacant sites with encampments	Incomplete

# Public Safety

Providing a safe community is a top priority for the El Cajon City Council. The 2021 City Council Action Plan provides three strategies to augment the City's current efforts.

# Public Safety

Goal/Outcome	Milestones/Tasks	Progress
Implement technologies that could assist in the response and services provided by the City's Fire and Police Departments	Council to approve El Cajon 2.0 Smart City Plan (which establishes a framework by which to consider technology initiatives)	Complete – the El Cajon 2.0 Plan was approved on April 27, 2021 by the Council.
	Convene existing Police Department Tech & Innovations Group to consider business needs and technology through the lens of the El Cajon 2.0 Smart City Plan	Complete – the Group meets quarterly.
	Establish a Heartland Fire Research & Development committee to identify needs and possible pilot programs	Complete – Heartland Fire & Rescue held its first meeting with IT staff in January 2022.
	Council to receive a report on possible pilot programs for funding in the FY 2022/23 budget	In Process – a Request for Innovation (RFI) titled “Technology as a Force Multiplier” was issued in July 2021, which resulted in up to four potential pilot projects with responsive vendors. One zero cost pilot has been completed. Staff is in negotiations with other vendors to determine scope and pilot costs.

# Public Safety

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Evaluate public safety staffing and equipment needs for the City as it grows	Develop an analytics formula to forecast staffing and equipment demands from new residential and commercial properties and develop funding strategies to meet future demands	In Process – staff is exploring alternative metrics to officers per 1,000 residents to have a clearer position on public safety staffing needs. We are hoping to rely on SDSU Capstone project students to assist in this analysis.
	Engage SDSU Masters in Public Administration students as part of a capstone project to compare El Cajon staffing with other communities in San Diego County, factoring in crime data, mental health issues, socio-economic characteristics, etc.	Incomplete – the SDSU capstone groups did not select an El Cajon project in 2021/22.
	Council to receive a comprehensive report on analytics formulas and SDSU capstone project results	N/A
Launch a human trafficking/safety education campaign	Council to receive a presentation on human trafficking (regional trends, efforts made to combat, etc.)	In Process – the community liaison with the District Attorney's Office who will be providing the presentation is not available until 2022. The presentation will be scheduled in first quarter 2022.
	Using social media, share District Attorney resources about human trafficking	Ongoing – staff has posted social media information and will make a larger push on January 11, 2022 for National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness.
	Ensure that all City staff receive training on how to recognized human trafficking	Ongoing – information/training has been provided to City staff.

# Miscellaneous

The 2021 City Council Action Plan includes four additional miscellaneous goals for 2021.

# Miscellaneous

Goal/Outcome	Milestones/Tasks	Progress
Consider an Election Integrity Ordinance	Present optional components of an election integrity ordinance for Council feedback	Complete – report provided to Council on June 8, 2021.
	Relying on Council feedback, draft and present ordinance for adoption	Complete – resolution approved by the Council on September 14, 2021.
Explore a process in which businesses can operate under modified zoning rules and explore policy opportunities to permanently relax regulations post-COVID-19	Council to consider temporarily extending outdoor dining relaxed regulations until formal policy is developed later in 2021	Complete – on November 9, 2021, the Council extended the policy through December 31, 2022.
	With input provided by Planning Commission, review zoning code for changes in concert with the State-mandated housing regulation changes and present for Council approval	<p>In Process – on July 27, 2021, the Council approved submittal of the Housing Element. HCD found issues with the document. Modifications will be provided to the Council in first quarter 2022.</p> <p>Also, Phase I of the zoning code amendment will be presented to the Council on 12-14-21 and includes outdoor display opportunities for general retail, streamline permitting for food tracks, extended operating hours and use area for breweries, and reduced vehicle maneuvering requirements allowing for more developable area.</p>



# Miscellaneous

Goal/Outcome	Milestones/Tasks	Progress
Consider an Election Integrity Ordinance	Present optional components of an election integrity ordinance for Council feedback	Complete – report provided to Council on June 8, 2021.
Explore modified sign regulations regarding flashing and/or lighted signs and window treatments	Council to receive a report reviewing the City's current sign/ design standards, along with options, in order to receive City Council feedback	Complete – report provided to the Council on September 14, 2021.
	Based on feedback from Council, present proposed changes to the Planning Commission	N/A
	Present recommendation from Planning Commission to the Council	N/A
Promote mental wellbeing of City Staff	Council to receive a presentation on 1) mental health in the workplace, 2) programs launched by the City, and 3) other ideas for the future	Complete – a report was provided to the City Council on January 25, 2022.
	Continue to implement programs	Complete